GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
ENVIRONMENT, FORESTS AND CLIMATE CHANGE
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2672
ANSWERED ON:10.05.2016
Impact of Plastic Waste
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Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT, FORESTS AND CLIMATE CHANGE be pleased to state:

(a) the number of Committees/Task Forces/Panels constituted by the Government to examine the hazardous impact of plastic waste on environment during each of the last three years and the current year along with their main recommendations;
(b) whether it is a fact that the generation of plastic waste and its harmful effect on human life have increased despite several measures taken by the Government for management of plastic waste in the country;
(c) if so, the details thereof, State/ UT-wise and the reasons therefor along with the reaction of the Government thereto;
(d) whether cases of violation of Plastic Waste (Management and Handling) Rules, 2011 have come to the notice of the Government during the said period; and
(e) if so, the details thereof, State/ UT-wise and the reasons therefor along with corrective steps taken/being taken by the Government in this regard?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE (INDEPENDENT CHARGE) FOR ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE

(SHRI PRAKASH JAVADEKAR)

(a) No study on impact of plastic waste on environment was carried out by the Ministry during last three years. However, the environmental impact of plastic waste has been examined by various committees in the past which includes a Task Force headed by Shri Dilip Biswas in 1997 constituted to formulate a strategy and action program for management of plastic waste; Justice Ranganath Mishra Committee in 2002 which examined environmental hazards posed by indiscriminate littering and disposal of plastic waste; R. C. Chopra Committee in 2007 which assessed the environmental hazards related to use of plastic bags in the city of Delhi; Expert Committee appointed by the Ministry in 2010 to evolve road map for management of waste in the country including plastic waste; and the study in 2008-09 by the Central Pollution Control Board to assess the impact of plastics waste disposal on soil and water quality at Lucknow dumpsites. Key recommendations of those committees included coordinated approach for plastic waste management by manufacturers, consumers, waste collectors, re-cyclers as well as civic authorities, involvement of manufacturers in implementation of regulatory framework on plastic waste management, increase thickness of plastic carry bags, ban multilayered and metalized pouches, encourage use of biodegradable plastic carry bag etc.
(b) & (c) The above studies indicated that plastic waste and bags if not collected systematically, choke drainage system and create unhygienic conditions; animals ingest plastic bags with the discarded food leading to their illness and sometimes death; the plastic waste when disposed of on soil reduces recharging of ground water aquifers; and when disposed of in landfill sites causes leaching of metals and additives into the soil and ground water.

The use of plastic carry bags has been completely banned in 14 States / Union Territories namely; Chandigarh, Chhattisgarh, Delhi, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu& Kashmir, Karnataka, Andaman & Nicobar Islands, Lakshadweep, Nagaland, Rajasthan, Sikkim, Tripura and Uttar Pradesh. Further, use of plastic carry bags has been partially banned in some pilgrimage centres, tourist and historical places located in the States of Andhra Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Goa, Gujarat, Karnataka, Odisha, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand.

Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change has comprehensively revised the Plastic Waste Management Rules on 18th March, 2016 in supersession of the Plastic Waste (Management and Handling) Rules, 2011. The salient features of the revised Rules include the expansion of the applicability area to include the entire country; the minimum permissible thickness of plastic carry bags increased from 40 to 50 microns; minimum thickness of 50 micron imposed for plastic sheets; introduction of Extended Producers Responsibility for the brands packaging their products in plastics; use of waste plastic in co-generation of energy and road construction; plastic waste minimization; source segregation & recycling involving waste pickers, recyclers & waste processors etc.

(d) & (e) The number of individuals / companies / distributors and other entities penalized for violation of the PW(M&H) Rules is annexed.

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